



## ResRequest's guidelines for **Working from home**

### Why do we have a work from home policy?

When it comes to policies that benefit both the company **and** staffer the question should be, why not?

Before the internet and modern communication technology it was difficult or impossible to do most tasks when not in the office. That was where the files and documents were, where you would find your colleagues, and where clients and others would come to find you. You couldn't even phone someone unless you knew where they were and the phone number there. Not a problem since during office hours you were at the office.

### Enabling technology

Modern technology allows you to communicate from anywhere, by voice or video, for very little cost. Your files are no longer on paper at the office but in the cloud and on your laptop. Your phone and your laptop are more powerful than mainframe computers of just a couple of decades ago. A super computer and Star Trek communicator right there in your pocket!

### What are you paid for?

You are not paid for your time or input. You are paid for your output. A business is an organisation that provides products and services that customers are willing to pay for, at a higher price than they cost to produce. The difference is "profit". Maximising output and minimising costs maximises profit.

As an individual you also try and maximise your "profit", in other words incur less expenses than the income you earn so you can save for retirement, educate your children, support your family or community, and a host of other reasons people work. The difference between your salary and your costs is your "profit".

Each role at ResRequest is defined based on the output needed. Some teams deliver products, some service and some paperwork.

### Greater output is the goal

Working from home is not always optimal. Sometimes meeting around a table, brainstorming around a whiteboard, or just working alongside your colleagues as you build new products and services is more productive when you're in the same room. Some roles (like office manager) by their nature require more office time than others (like sales).

Sometimes though, output would be greater for some tasks if you could focus without

distraction, in your own environment, and take advantage of home comforts while avoiding wasted time in traffic. You increase your “profit” by avoiding the costs in time and money from the commute, and increase the company’s “profit” by being more productive in your home environment completely tailored to your needs. A win-win for everyone.

## Different life circumstances

Still focusing on producing the most output at the lowest cost (financial and non-financial), people also have different life circumstances. People with young children at home might want to spend office hours at the office where their productivity is greatest.

People with children at primary school might want to attend a sports event on a weekday afternoon and catch up with work in the evening when the children go to sleep early.

The staffers with more experience in the bank might want to spend a greater proportion of their time working in a quiet home environment because their role now has less collaboration and more introspective thought required to maximise output.

For different personal circumstances and stages of life, maximising output often requires different parameters for different people. You are in the best position to evaluate how best to split your time between home and the office to maximise your output in your specific circumstances. Of course, your team leader has the all important task of coordinating your output so you need to be in regular communication to check they’re happy with your delivery and movements.

## Won’t people just stay at home and not work?

Not for long they won’t. ResRequest measures and pays for output not input. ResRequesters are all high achievers and staying at home and not working will soon produce a productivity gap that is impossible to hide. As high achievers passionate about their role in delivering our exceptional products, services and value to our clients, ResRequesters produce exceptional output not because they are managed but because that is who they are.

Any policy or procedure that can facilitate output while increasing convenience and reducing cost is beneficial to all parties.

## How can I manage my staff if they’re not here?

Good question. At ResRequest we believe you should be managing output, not staff. ResRequest employs competent high achievers and each is responsible for managing their own time and output.

Your role as team leader is to be an enabler for your staff to assist them in producing the maximum output, which can mean working a portion of their time from home. Your role is also one of reducing impediments to maximum output and removing barriers to productivity.

Sometimes you also need to work from home to wrap up on bits and pieces and give your team time to collaborate without you.

## Bottom line?

ResRequest exists to deliver the best possible products and services, to our loyal client base, while maximising returns to all stakeholders (shareholders, business partners, clients and staff). A work from home policy, used judiciously and where it benefits both the company and the staffer, maximises that output and productivity.

Rigid office hours do not maximise productivity for the staffer or ResRequest and benefits neither party. We rely on each staffer to be responsible to deliver maximum output for their role, and only you can determine how best to manage your time to achieve that goal.

## When does working from home not work for ResRequest?

The short answer is, any time your output at home is lower than it would be at the office, and/or lower than it should be for your role and responsibilities.

The long answer is when one or more of these factors is true:

- Your home environment is not conducive to increased productivity (loud noise, family disruption, inadequate infrastructure, non-work distractions etc).
- You are really taking time off for something personal (organising a trip, a party, running personal errands) and hoping to “catch up” later. That’s like borrowing and then rolling money, it snowballs and eventually catches up and catches you out. This is what leave is for.
- You know yourself and that you do not have the self discipline to be productive at home, i.e. you need the structure of office hours to assist your productivity. We are not all cut out to self-manage our time effectively.
- Your absence negatively impacts the productivity of your colleagues. Your increased output and work from home convenience cannot negatively impact anyone else’s output.
- Your shift clock makes it difficult for teams to shuffle and coordinate meetings during our operational hours (which are Monday to Friday from 08h00 to 17h00). When we accommodate your shift clock, you still need to fit in with the majority, including being able to accept last minute meetings or meeting changes.
- Colleagues, clients, or other stakeholders need you at the office to fulfill a role or carry out a task.
- You are busy with tasks that cannot be done while out of the office (e.g. presenting or running a face-to-face meeting).
- Your role requires office time (e.g. receptionist, team leader etc).

## Does my team leader get a say?

Absolutely. Your team leader trusts you to deliver regardless of your location. Likewise, you need to trust your team leader to be able to pinpoint when you’re needed in the office. It’s your team leader’s responsibility to ensure you, and your team, deliver so the business achieves what it’s customers need. Be sure to check with your team leader before you work from home. Also ask him or her for guidelines on when and how to check in and how you should report back on what you’ve achieved while you’ve been out of the office.

Importantly, if managing your time is not a strong suit then you may need to limit the time you are not in the office. Don’t put your team leader in the position of telling you that it’s not for you, know when you’re a person that cannot work from home and stop it before they need to ask you.

## Exceptional circumstances - working from home for extended periods of time

When working from home under exceptional circumstances such as the Covid-19 outbreak additional regulations will be in place to facilitate effective teamwork and collaboration. A shared calendar will be created for you to record whether you will be; actively working, on leave, on family responsibility leave or on sick leave. This will allow your team members to know if you are available to work on projects etc.

All leave will be recorded on the RR Staff Leave spreadsheet as per normal operational procedures. If you take family responsibility or sick leave you will be required to provide supporting documents for these types of leave. In addition, if you have been on sick leave you will be required to provide a medical certificate specifying that you are fit to return to duty should you wish to return to working at the office. This must be done prior to your return to work.

## **National help**

The CCMA encourages you to make use of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases Coronavirus Emergency 24-hour hotline number 0800-029-999 or WhatsApp number 060 012 3456 and to visit their website at [www. nicd.ac.za](http://www.nicd.ac.za) if required. For those who are tested at independent laboratories, remember that these are preliminary results. All positive results must be verified by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

Our purpose of work from home has always been to facilitate the scenarios where working from home is more productive. An example would be when focused work on things like writing system specifications or coding requires long periods without the interruptions of colleagues and general office activities.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the spotlight onto work from home in a way it didn't before the crisis.

What is critical as we go into a period of uncertainty where our revenues will drop dramatically, and for an unknown period, is that we emerge stronger and more resilient. We will have significant ground to make up when this pandemic subsides, and the more productive and efficient we can be during this period the faster and more effective will be our recovery.

That means work from home must be at least as productive as working at the office. We have placed extraordinary measures in place to safeguard our health at our office and minimise the chance of infection. If you are unable to be productive at home then working from the office is recommended (unless this is escalated to a lock down, which will be clearly communicated if necessary).

As we focus on the positives and opportunities that inevitably arise in a crisis, this is an opportunity to stress test the work from home policy and focus on achieving the productivity benefits that are the intention of the policy.

We need to take the opportunities this crisis presents including optimising work from home, use this quieter period to focus on backlog, and recommit ourselves to being ultra productive. The strong will survive during the crisis, and thrive afterwards. ResRequest will be one of the survivors if we pull together and have an extreme focus on productivity and delivery to ensure we hit the ground running when this crisis is behind us.

Here are steps we would like you to implement within your teams as we move forward to an extended work from home period.

## Some great ideas for an effective approach to working from home

[How to actually work from home](#)

[How to collaborate effectively when your team is remote](#)

[Building trust in your virtual team](#)

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### Team work from home checklist:

- ❑ **Department meeting to explore and discuss extended work from home norms**

Each department, with the team lead, to go through this Work from home policy document verbally. Watch the three videos and discuss techniques and norms you can implement during this extended work from home strategy. From this workshop your team leader will prepare a list of norms that will work for your team, *document this on a Google sheet that everyone can access.*
- ❑ **Individual meetings with your team lead to clarify expectations, deliverables and work through any challenges you personally may face with work from home**

Meet with your team leader individually. Your team leader should present a guideline of expectations iro availability, frequent catch ups and feedback from you on your delivery. This meeting will include discussions around:

  - ❑ Individual KPAs
  - ❑ Formats for checking in and reporting in
  - ❑ Times when you must be available (team meetings etc on skype)
  - ❑ How to record your work from home status (on shared calendar)
  - ❑ Challenges specific to you and what we can do to alleviate those if possible  
*Document this on your KPA Google sheet.*
- ❑ **Final clarification of how the team will operate**

Do a final meeting as a department. In this meeting your team leader will present a summary of norms and expectations across all teams and individuals, everyone in your team needs to know who is responsible for what, when etc. Everyone should know where to find the Google sheet with these norms. During this meeting, do a general Q & A to allow clarification of any points. Address these in an open forum so everyone hears the answers.

*Next: Let's beat this thing!*

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